

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 211462

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PORG, UNGA, RQ, ET

SUBJECT: PUERTO RICO AND THE COMMITTEE OF 24

REFERENCE: A) ADDIS ABABA 3581; B) USUN 3227

1. IN LIGHT OF REF (B), YOU SHOULD AGAIN APPROACH
ETHIOPIANS AT HIGHEST LEVEL YOU THINK APPROPRIATE AND,
WITH REFERENCE TO MENGISTU'S REMARKS AT PRESENTATION
OF CREDENTIALS, STATE THAT WE URGE THAT PMGSE CONSIDER
CAREFULLY ITS NATIONAL INTERESTS AND THE PRECEDENTIAL
IMPLICATIONS OF POSITION IT TAKES ON PUERTO RICAN ISSUE
IN THE C-24. WHILE REITERATING POINTS MADE PREVIOUSLY,
YOU SHOULD ADD THAT:

- THE QUESTION OF PUERTO RICO IS A MATTER OF CONCERN
AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT.
THE STATUS OF PUERTO RICO WAS DETERMINED IN 1953 WHEN
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THE UNGA ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE PUERTO RICANS HAD
EXERCISED THEIR RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION. PUERTO
RICO IS A FUNCTIONING DEMOCRACY AND ENJOYS AN ACTIVE,
VIGOROUS POLITICAL LIFE. REPRESENTATIVES OF ALL POLITICAL
MOVEMENTS, INCLUDING THE INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT,
OPERATE FREELY ON THE ISLAND. CONSEQUENTLY, ANY
EFFORT BY THE COMMITTEE OF 24 TO RESTORE PUERTO RICO

TO THE LIST OF NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES MUST

BE VIEWED BY THE UNITED STATES AS INTERFERENCE IN
MATTERS WITHIN ITS DOMESTIC JURISDICTION AND INVOLVING
ITS TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY. FOR THIS REASON, WE MUST
VIEW SUPPORT FOR THE CUBAN RESOLUTION IN THE C-24 AS
A MATTER AFFECTING OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS.

- ETHIOPIA, PERHAPS MORE THAN ANY OTHER GOVERNMENT,
SHOULD BE SENSITIVE TO THE PRECEDENT WHICH WOULD BE
ESTABLISHED SHOULD THE C-24 DECIDE TO PLACE PUERTO
RICO ON THE LIST OF NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES.
ETHIOPIA'S LEGAL POSITION WITH RESPECT TO ERITREA
AND EVEN WITH RESPECT TO THE OGADEN COULD NOT BUT BE
WEAKENED THROUGH THE KIND OF ACTION WHICH CUBA SEEKS
TO BRING ABOUT IN THE COMMITTEE OF 24.

- THE PUERTO RICAN PEOPLE HAVE REPEATEDLY BEEN GIVEN
AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS THEIR VIEWS ON THE STATUS
QUESTION THROUGH THEIR VOTES FOR THE MAJOR PARTIES.
THE INDEPENDENCE PARTY IN PARTICULAR HAS SEEN ITS
SHARE OF THE VOTE DECLINE FROM 19 IN 1953 TO 6 IN
1976.

- THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES HAS PERSONALLY
ISSUED A PROCLAMATION STATING THAT HE IS WILLING TO
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SUPPORT ANY STATUS WHICH THE PEOPLE OF PUERTO RICO
DECIDE UPON THROUGH A REFERENDUM. THAT PROCLAMATION
HAS BEEN WARMLY GREETED IN PUERTO RICO. THE PROSPECT
OF SUCH A POPULAR REFERENDUM, WHICH THE CURRENT GOVERNOR
HAS CALLED FOR AFTER THE 1980 ELECTION, SHOULD DEMON-
STRATE TO ETHIOPIA AND TO OTHER MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE
OF 24 THAT PUERTO RICANS WILL BE GIVEN EVERY OPPORTUNITY
TO CONTINUE TO EXERCISE THEIR RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION.

- FOR THE FOREGOING REASONS, AND IN CONSIDERATION OF
THE IMPORTANCE OF STRENGTHENING THE BILATERAL RELATIONS
BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND ETHIOPIA, WE URGE THAT
ETHIOPIA ASSOCIATE ITSELF IN THE COMMITTEE OF 24
WITH A PROCEDURAL MOTION TO AGAIN DEFER THE QUESTION
OF PUERTO RICO.

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